

GOD PORTRAYS WOMEN

by

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ESTHER

A REMARKABLE STATEMENT is made in Psalm 105. **“He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him”** (v. 17-19). The same might be truly said of the captive maiden Esther. **“The Lord sent her”** before Him to deliver a nation.

When this lovely child was born, her parents did not know God’s plan for her life. They never dreamed that she was to sit on the throne of a world empire. While Esther was still a little girl both her father and mother died. But He who is the Father of the fatherless enriched her life with the love and devotion of an older cousin, Mordecai. He took her for his own daughter and brought her up in the fear of the Lord. She was most appreciative of his care, held him in the highest esteem and loyally followed his counsels.

Mordecai was a porter or doorkeeper in the king’s gate.

The palace in Shushan was one of great splendor, for king Ahasuerus had an extraordinary love of display. The color harmony of the furnishings and draperies would charm an interior decorator. Architects might well study the wonderfully preserved pillars and marble pavements which have been unearthed and yet have retained their original colors.

In the third year of his reign king Ahasuerus made a feast, to which he invited all the nobles and chief men from Shushan and every one of the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. The feast lasted a hundred and eighty days. This elaborate entertainment was followed by a seven-day feast for the common people of the city. At the same time Queen Vashti had a party in the royal house for the women.

On the seventh day when the king’s heart was merry with wine he boasted about the beauty of his wife. He had indulged too long, and like others who do so, lost his inhibitions. Suddenly he called his chamberlains to bring Vashti so that all present might see her beauty. She refused to come before a lot of drunken revelers. The king’s command was contrary to their national customs and an outrage to the queen’s royal dignity. In that land the women were kept in seclusion. Vashti’s modesty and purity were her birthright. She valued her fidelity to her own husband more than the admiration and applause of strange men.

Had the king been sober he would never have commanded his wife to appear before strangers. Her refusal put an end to the hilarity of the party. The king was embarrassed and became angry. The members of his cabinet who were present advised the king to divorce Vashti. It is remarkable that he did not at once put her to death. Subsequently he seems to have had moments of regret and depression over this thoughtless and unreasonable demand, for he knew that Vashti was an admirable and virtuous wife.

The king's servants sensed his remorse and suggested that he marry again and forget about Vashti. A national beauty contest was proposed and carried out with great enthusiasm. The hundred and twenty-seven provinces were thoroughly searched to find the most beautiful virgins and bring them to the palace at Shushan. The king was to choose one of them to be his new queen.

Among the lovely girls they brought was Esther, the cousin of Mordecai. She so pleased the officer in charge of the women that he gave her and her seven maidens the best place in the house of the women.

Each candidate had to spend a year in preparation before she would be brought to the king. During that time she was trained in proper court etiquette and went through all the approved methods of beauty culture of that time.

Mordecai found the days of that year long and lonely. His concern for the welfare of his adopted daughter increased. Every day he walked before the court of the women's house to learn how Esther did and what would become of her. No doubt he prayed for her spiritual and temporal preservation. His prayers were answered. She remained unspoiled by favor or flattery. She was natural, humble, contented and thoughtful of others. She loved her foster father dearly and never forgot that she was an alien Israelite captive. She was greatly loved by her companions. Hegai, the keeper of the women showed her much kindness. She was so tactful and gracious that none of the other candidates were jealous of her.

Each girl was permitted to ask for anything in the house that she would like to wear on the day that she was to be presented to the king. When it was Esther's turn to go to the king's house, she required nothing more than Hegai had appointed. She came to the king in the modesty and beauty of unspoiled youth, without any artificial adornment. **“And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her”** (2:15). And Ahasuerus loved Esther **“so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king”** (2:17-18).

Matthew Henry says the release was either a remittance of taxes in arrears or a release of certain prisoners.

Now that Esther was queen of so vast a realm, she did not forget him who had been both father and mother to her. **“For Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him”** (2:20).

In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains were angry and sought an opportunity to assassinate the king. This was known to Mordecai who told it to Esther. She reported the plot to the king in Mordecai's name. When the matter was investigated, they found that it was true, and both men were hanged. A record of this incident was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

Though Mordecai was a captive of war, in exile, he was loyal to the country where he earned his living. He was no anarchist. He no doubt knew the word of the Lord, spoken by Jeremiah, "**Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace**" (29:7). What recognition was given to Mordecai for his loyalty at that time? None; it was not God's time.

After these things the king promoted Haman the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes. "**And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence**" (3:2).

Why did he not bow? Was he merely stubborn? He was loyal to the king. Why was he so discourteous to his prime minister? He was actually a conscientious objector. He would not give to any man reverence or homage due to God alone. Moreover, Haman was an Amalekite, a descendent of king Agag who was spared by Saul when God had commanded him to utterly destroy Amalek.

Mordecai's fellow guardians of the gate tried to reason with him about his attitude toward the prime minister. Why be so unpleasant and undiplomatic? Other good men bow, why be so obnoxious? He told them he was a Jew and must refuse divine adoration to all but God. The three Hebrew children belong in this class with Mordecai, and so do John the Baptist, Luther, and John Knox.

It is never easy to go against the tide, to stand alone, to refuse to listen to impure stories, to approve of cleverness divorced from cleanliness, and genius apart from goodness.

When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed nor did him reverence, he was full of wrath. He had received homage from all in Shushan save one. The refusal of that one destroyed the sweetness in the cup of his popularity.

A truly great man would have ignored it. A little mind magnifies every privation or slight. A cheerful soul thoroughly enjoys his blessings. What is your attitude toward life? Blessed are the unoffended. "**Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them**" (Psalm 119:165). God can make the wrath of man to praise Him.

Let us ask ourselves these questions. Do I allow myself to be upset over trivial things? Am I unjust because of a personal grievance, not only to the offender but also to his friends or relatives? Do I condemn the whole on account of the failure or weakness of one?

When Haman learned that Mordecai was a Jew, one of the captives from Israel, he sought to destroy all the Jews throughout the entire kingdom. Satan was the real instigator of this wicked plan and he found Haman a very willing tool. His demand for revenge was entirely out of proportion to the disrespect shown. This was one occasion when Satan tried to thwart God's purpose by destroying His people.

Haman appointed a day eleven months away as the one on which to execute his cruel pogrom. This allowed plenty of time for the edict to reach the farthest outpost of the kingdom. The lot was cast before Haman in the first month and the execution was to be on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. **"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord"** (Proverbs 16:33).

To carry out his wicked purpose Haman told the king that there was a group of people in his kingdom scattered all through his domain who did not obey the king's laws but had quite different ones of their own. He said that the king was losing money by letting them live, and he proposed to pay into the public treasury a huge sum if they could be destroyed. The king gave his permission, and the messengers were sent out speedily with orders to kill all the Jews in the month Adar. **"And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed"** (3:15).

When Mordecai learned of the dastardly edict, he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried with a loud, bitter cry, and came before the king's gate but could not come any farther. There was mourning, fasting, and wailing among all the Jews. There was no rebellion neither were there threats or violence, but a desire to let the king know the injustice planned against them by the prime minister.

When Queen Esther heard of her cousin's unusual behavior in the city she was exceedingly grieved and sent raiment to clothe Mordecai and to take away his sackcloth from him; but he would not receive it. She sent a messenger to inquire the cause of his grief. Mordecai told Hatach what had happened and sent a copy of the infamous decree for Esther to read. He charged her to go in to the king and plead for her people. He admonished her to identify herself with her suffering people. This was the time for her to make a public confession of her God and nationality, and to make intercession for all the Jews.

This was a tremendous request. Esther counted the cost and sent word to Mordecai that the death sentence awaited anyone who came uncalled into the inner court of the king unless he held out to him the golden sceptre. There was a further discouraging note, **"I have not been called in unto the king these thirty days"** (4:11).

"Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" 4:13-14).

The most critical day of Esther's life had arrived.

When one wakes in the morning he does not know what important decision must be made before sunset. It is therefore necessary for us to seek God's overruling care and wisdom that we may behave worthily of Him and in line with His purposes for us. As Mordecai pointed out to Esther, God is not shut up to one individual. He is able to raise up someone else who will do His will.

Mordecai wisely called Esther's attention to the fact that she now had the opportunity of being God's deliverer for her nation. This once carefree, beautiful girl had been raised to royal estate to accomplish a wonderful deliverance.

Esther did not feel that she was competent for this momentous duty. She needed God and the support of her people in prayer the way Daniel felt the need of the fellowship in prayer of his three friends. The Lord took Peter, James and John to Gethsemane and asked them to watch and pray while He went yonder to agonize before God concerning the deliverance of "the many."

"Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

This is the important point of the whole book of Esther. When Pilate asked the Lord, "**Art thou a king?**" He replied, "**To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world.**" Life is simplified when we discover God's purpose for our existence. God has placed each of us in the very best circumstances for our spiritual education. Let us try to find out why God has placed us just where we are and see that we accomplish His purpose. May we never disappoint His expectations of us. Are we as clay in the hands of the Great Potter to be made a vessel to His liking and for His use?

Then Esther bade Mordecai, "**Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him**" (4:16-17).

She recognized before she could be used she must be in right relationship with God. Her position, personal beauty and charm were insufficient. There was need for repentance, humiliation and dependence on God if there was to be deliverance and salvation. It speaks well for her that, though a Jewess, she was assured of the love and sympathy of her Gentile servants. She could count on their fellowship and prayers in this crisis. Had she taught them to pray to God? "**I also and my maidens will fast likewise; so will I go in unto the king.**" She did not depend entirely on the prayers of others for her. She leaned on God for herself.

They would be three memorable days to those maidens. Perhaps the palace had never before been a place where prayer was wont to be made. Paul, in every letter save one, asked his converts to pray for him. Esther made haste slowly. Like Abraham, when called to sacrifice Isaac, he went three days' journey. Our Lord, knowing the full implication of His last journey, "**steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.**"

“If I perish, I perish.” There was no turning back in Esther’s decision, she offered herself a living sacrifice. Had she saved her life, she would have lost it. Because she was willing to lose her life, others were saved.

When Esther dared to go in unbidden to the king, she had the good sense to make herself as attractive as possible. She put on her royal apparel. She was more careful than on the day of her coronation. Some Christians who wish to win unbelievers will have to make themselves more attractive and acceptable if they would succeed. When the king saw Esther he held out the golden sceptre and she drew near and touched the top of it. There was a spiritual beauty about her after her fasting and prayer, a womanly courage and dignity, as she stood there that appealed to the king. In contrast to these earthly royal customs, those who are the Lord’s are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace. Our God is not subject to moods nor is He ever inaccessible to us. His sceptre is always extended in welcome.

The king asked, **“What wilt thou, Queen Esther? What is thy request? It shall be given thee to the half of my kingdom!”** (5:3).

He was proud to have her in association with himself. Does every unsaved husband have reason to be proud of his Christian wife because of her beauty of character, tact and spiritual graces?

“Esther answered, If it seem good to the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him. Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said” (5:4-5).

She acted with feminine intuitiveness when she invited the king and his prime minister to a party. She was not in a hurry to present her request. Many a noble enterprise has failed because of its untimely introduction. She aroused the king’s interest and curiosity by her delay. The king, after dessert, again promised to grant her request. But she felt the psychological moment had not yet arrived. Was she timid and did she need more prayer for wisdom? She invited them to a second banquet on the morrow when she would present her request.

Then Haman went forth that day joyful and with a glad heart. The prime minister was bursting with pride because he was the exclusive guest of the king and queen two days in succession.

But his joy was short-lived.

When Haman saw that Mordecai did not stand up or move for him, he was full of indignation. He was a man of extremes, full of gladness or full of madness. He would be a difficult man to live with; his moods would affect his whole household. His doting mother had named him *“Magnificent,”* and his wife soon learned to cater to his moods and his self-importance.

Characteristically he gave a party to his friends and entertained them by talking about his wealth, family, position and prospects. And as if to crown it all he added, **“Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow I am invited unto her also with the king”** (5:12).

But his cup of joy was marred because one Jew refused him deference. **“All this availeth me nothing,”** he wailed, **“so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king’s gate”** (5:13). All Ahab’s possessions availed him nothing when he wanted Naboth’s vineyard.

Do we minimize our manifold blessings because of one privation? One would think Jezebel and Haman’s wife Zeresh were sisters. Of course Haman must not be crossed. So Zeresh suggested, **“Let a gallows be made fifty cubits high [75 feet seems unduly high to hang one Jew] and tomorrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon; then go thou merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman”** (5:14).

He hastily summoned workmen to build the unsightly structure in his own courtyard without any delay.

“On that night could not the king sleep” (6:1). He who commanded a world empire could not command sleep. **“Thou holdest mine eyes waking”** (Psalm 77:4). It was a sleepless night for many. Haman and his servants, the king and his servants, and perhaps Esther. To invite sleep the king asked to have the records of the chronicles read to him. It was not conducive to slumber to remember that two of the doorkeepers would have assassinated him but for the intervention of Esther’s foster father. The king asked, **“What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?”** (6:3). They replied, **“Nothing.”**

At that unearthly hour Haman, who could not wait to do away with Mordecai under the edict, came to petition the king’s permission to hang him on the rising scaffold. The king heard someone in the court. He asked, **“Who is it? Let him come in.”** Before Haman could make his request the king asked, **“What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself?”** (6:6).

Self-occupation is indeed a snare. Evidently this was not the first time Haman had desired to be a king. His suggestions were very daring.

“Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor” (6:8-9).

Haman, still thinking the king meant himself, was delighted to hear him say, **“Make haste and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said.”** But what a blow to hear him add, **“And do even so to Mordecai the Jew”** (6:10). How he must have wished he had not asked for the things he wanted for himself! As a result he was compelled to walk like a groom through the city proclaiming the honor due to his enemy. Was this incident a token from the Lord to Esther that he had heard her prayers?

Instead of wearing the crown as he had anticipated, Haman covered his head as though he were already condemned to death, and hastened home mourning. I am sure he had scarcely entered the house before all were informed of his disgrace. What comfort were his friends and wife to him then? They only prophesied his downfall. **“If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall [the bowing is reversed now], thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him”** (6:13). **“Favor is deceitful”** (Proverbs 31:30).

In the midst of his grief the king’s chamberlains came to bring him to the banquet that the queen had prepared. How dare he keep her waiting? But he was in no mood for a banquet, or for an audience with their majesties.

The king and Haman came to the banquet. The king was curious, Haman was fearful, Esther was filled with a high resolve. While Esther delayed God had worked. The hour had struck. The king asked, **“What is thy petition, Queen Esther?”**

And in seventy-two words she presented an amazing plea that saved the lives of nearly a million people. The king recognized the wording of Haman’s infamous protocol. Esther pleaded first for her own life, knowing that would arouse the king’s personal interest and sympathy as well as his indignation that anyone would presume on the life of his loved consort.

Then she boldly associated all her people with herself in the same peril. Note the word, **“For we are sold.”**

Yes, Haman had offered to reimburse the royal treasury for the privilege to destroy the queen and her people. Then an eloquent argument followed, **“But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king’s damage”** (7:4).

Those last words, **“the king’s damage,”** would leave their impress on the monarch’s mind.

In a flash he saw through all the machinations and designs of his overindulged favorite. **“Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?”** (7:5) asked the king.

“The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman” (7:6).

Could anything be more dramatic! Haman was afraid in the presence of the king and queen. As his wrath rose the king went out to pace in the garden, piecing out in his mind the extent of the intrigue of this man he had trusted. **“The king’s wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favor is as dew upon the grass”** (Proverbs 19:12). It is a safe and wise procedure to go for a walk when agitated.

“Haman stood up to make request for his life” (7:7).

He sat down to eat and drink after writing a decree to destroy a whole nation.

When he came to judgment and realized his life hung in the balance, his indifference for others was exchanged for craven entreaty to save his own head. He saw that evil was determined against him by the king. In a paroxysm of fear he threw himself across the queen's couch pleading for his life.

At that moment the king entered. Prejudiced already, he misjudged Haman's attitude and passed sentence. They covered Haman's face, the indications of the death sentence. One of the courtiers suggested an appropriate mode of execution. **"Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman"** (7:9). Tersely the king commanded, **"Hang him thereon . . . So they hanged him on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai"** (7:10). Could anything be more ironical?

- **"God is a righteous judge [margin] and is angry with the wicked every day"** (Psalm 7:11).
- **"He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors"** (Psalm 7:13).
- **"Behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch"** (Malachi 4:1).

Haman's colossal scheme failed. He sought to revenge a personal slight. Let us be careful not to indulge in personal piques lest we make room for the Devil and we become his instrument for evil. Because Judas was covetous, Satan found a fertile ground in which to sow the seed-thought of selling the Lord of glory. Let us guard against vindictiveness, covetousness, backbiting, and all evil propensities.

On that day the king gave Esther the house of Haman, and made Mordecai the prime minister. The king's ring and seal which Haman had worn were given to Mordecai. **"And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite"** (8:3).

We all have things in our lives that we want **"put away."** Thank God, we are assured in Colossians that the handwriting which was against us has been blotted out! Christ **"took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them"** (Colossians 2:14-15). Since Christ has answered for all our sins, **"who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"** (Romans 8:33).

Esther said, **"If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman . . . which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces: for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"** (8:5-6). The Jews had a remarkable advocate in this beautiful queen!

It was a prayer with strong cryings and tears, not for herself; but for her sake and because it was right, she pleaded the salvation of her people. We too have an Advocate who pleads for us, and we are accepted because of our relationship to the Son of His love, and because it seems right in the eyes of God. The Lord feels deeply any persecution of His people.

When Saul was persecuting the early Christians the Lord arrested him with these words, “**Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**” (Acts 9:4).

The Head in Heaven was pained when the Body on earth was hurt, so intimately are we linked with Christ. Esther felt for her kindred. The prayer was answered for Esther’s sake. “**Write ye also for the Jews as it liketh you, in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s ring**” (8:8). “**Ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.**” “**Whatsoever ye ask in my name**” sounds very similar.

The scribes were called in to write a proclamation to all whom Haman had condemned to die that, on the day of the planned execution they were at liberty to stand for their lives. It was not to be an offensive movement but defensive. To the credit of the Jews it was thrice said, “**On the spoils laid not they their hands.**” But Mordecai had waxed greater and greater, and his fame went throughout all the provinces.

He now wore royal apparel and had the respect and loyalty of the citizens of Shushan. Haman’s ten sons were slain and, at the request of the Queen, their dead bodies were hanged on their father’s own invention, the gallows.

In the provinces seventy-five thousand persons were slain.

Alas, this was not the last anti-Semitic movement! In World War II what horrors were perpetrated because of race prejudice! Avarice, hatred, covetousness, ripen into most inhuman behavior. No wonder the Lord says, “**Avenge not yourselves.**” Leave the field clear for God’s wrath. It stands written, “**Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord**” (Romans 12:19). God can handle such matters better than we can. We would in anger deal forty stripes and one; with the Lord, “**forty stripes save one.**” David realizing this, said “**Let me fall into the hands of God and not into the hands of men.**”

Because of God’s wonderful intervention when He delivered His afflicted people, a holy day was proclaimed for thanksgiving to God. It was a day of joy and gladness, a feast and a good day.

Also a decree was made to keep in perpetuity this holiday on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the twelfth month to remind them how their sorrow was turned unto them to joy, their mourning into a good day, that they should make them days of feasting and joy and of sending portions one to another and gifts to the poor. These are called days of Purim.

This remembrance of God’s salvation is celebrated among the Jews in every generation) every family, every province, and every city to this day.

Our Lord calls us to commemorate in perpetuity, or till He come, the greater deliverance He wrought at Calvary for us. So, through the centuries, there has been a plain loaf of bread on the communion table and beside it a cup of wine. His words at the first institution of the memorial have never lost their charm or sweetness for those delivered.

“With desire, I have desired to eat this passover with you. This is my body which is given for you. This is my blood which is shed for you for the remission of sins.”

How can we help but break forth into songs of joy and gladness at the remembrance of His great love, devotion and mercy to us? Each of us calls on our soul to **“bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits.”**

I wonder if the Jews at Purim enjoy singing Psalm 126. **“When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion . . . our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with singing.”** Then said they among the heathen, **“The Lord hath done great things for them.”** Israel sang, **“The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad.”**

So great was the impression made on the heathen people that many people of the land became Jews. Oh, that our joy in the Lord and His wonderful salvation would attract others to Him!

A beautiful tribute was paid to him who had so much to do with the shaping of Esther’s character. This should encourage all who contribute to child-training. **“Mordecai, the Jew, was next unto the king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed”** (10:3).

Could such an epitaph be written on our tombstone? Are we loyal to our country? Are we God-fearing, pious and consistent? Do we get along well with others at home and in our church? Have we a good report of those within and without? Are we seeking our own or others’ benefit? Are people richer because of our relationship with them? Are we contributors of good works and good words? There are so many agitators in the world and in the church that there is need of those who **“speak peace to all his seed.”** Is the law of kindness in our mouth? **“Seek peace and pursue it.”**

We take our leave of the beautiful Esther who weighed well the words, **“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this.”**

She sought to find out why God put her where she was. She wanted to know God’s purpose for her life. She prayed she might fulfill that purpose. She lived for God and served her own generation. Let us not let slip opportunities God places in our way to be a blessing to others. He can even use a pretty girl. Esther was not just an ornament in a palace, but a woman of character, a counselor at court, formulating decrees for the peace of a nation. Circumstances had developed her. She was beautiful, affectionate, solicitous, grateful, sympathetic, godly, prayerful, faithful to her friends, resolute in purpose and had personal convictions. Let us ask, **“Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?”** Learning it, say, **“Here am I, send me.”**

~ end of chapter 15 ~

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